

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12
NEA-10 OIC-02 SSM-03 HA-05 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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O 171427Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8810
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEL GRADE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USINT HAVANNA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4064

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PORC, SY
SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: JULY 25-29 NON-ALIGNED FONMINS
MEETING AT BELGRADE

REF: STATE 178240

1. POLOFF RAISED CUBA'S ROLE, MIDDLE EAST, AND ZIONISM/RACISM
AT MFA JULY 17 AND WILL ARAISE REMAINING ISSUES JULY 18. WHILE
AMBASSADOR LEONARD CAN DEAL WITH MANY OF THESE ISSUES IN UN
CONTEXT AND WITH GREATER DETAIL DURING HIS VISIT, SYRIAN
PREPARATIONS FOR NAM BELGRADE MEETING ARE WELL UNDERWAY AND
WE FELT IT WAS BETTER TO GET POINTS OVER AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE,
IN GENREAL WE FOUND FMA OFFICIAL UNRESPONSIVE TO APPEALS
FOR MODERATION, BUT HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH OUR APPROACH ON
CUBA.

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2. CUBA:
MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
NAJDI JAZZAR, IN RESPONSE TO TALKING POINTS (REFTEL) ON
CUBA INDICATED THAT CUBANS, IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS, HAD
QUESTIONED US MOTIVES AND ACCUSED US OF INTERVENING IN NAM
AFFAIRS. JAZZAR SAID THAT US DEMARCHE WAS USEFUL TO SARG
FOR PUTTING ISSUE IN PERSPECTIVE. AS USG KNOWS, SYRIA

HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND CONSIDERS CUBAN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN AFRICA AS BEING AT REQUEST OF SOVEREIGN AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS. SARG FEELS THAT ISSUE OF CUBAN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA IS DIVISIVE FOR NAM AND WOULD PREFER THAT IT NOT BE RAISED AS MAJOR ISSUE. IN ANY EVENT, SYRIA WILL STAND WITH CUBA IF SUBJECT IS RAISED. (COMMENT: SYRIA IS SINGING SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TUNE ON CUBA NOW THAT IT APPEARS CUBA HAS NOT AND WILL NOT INTERVENE DIRECTLY IN ERITREA.)

3. MIDDLE EAST:

POLOFF SIMPLY NOTED THAT IT WOULD APPEAR MIDDLE EAST QUESTION MIGHT BE AS DIVISIVE AS CUBAN ONE FOR NAM AND SUGGESTED THAT IN INTEREST OF ULTIMATE ARAB UNITY SYRIA MIGHT SEEK TO TONE DOWN ITS CRITICISM OF EGYPT. ON THE CONTRARY, J"4 REPLIED, SYRIA WILL TAKE TO BELGRADE THE SAME INITIAL POSITION IT HELD IN HAVANA FOR THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING. GIVEN SADAT'S LACK OF PROGRESS, SYRIA FEELS IT WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION THAN IT WAS IN HAVANA TO GET A REALLY STRONG RESOLUTION OUT OF THE NAM. POLOFF CAUTIONED THAT SYRIA OUGHT TO HINK IN LONGER INTER-ARAB TERMS AND ESCHEW SHORT TERM PROPAGANDA VICTORY, BUT ARGUMENT FELL ON DEAF EARS. JAZZAR COMMENTED THAT AS SOON AS SITUATION CHANGES SYRIA'S POSITION WILL CHANGE, BUT,, THUS FAR, SADAT IS CONTINUING HIS INITIATIVE AND BEGIN IS REMAINING INTRANSIGENT SO WHY SHOULD SYRIA DO OTHER THAN ATTACK SADAT? (COMMENT: THE SYRIAN SMELL BLOOD AND WE EXPECT THEY WILL PUSH CONFIDENTIAL

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EVEN HARDER THAN AT HAVANA FOR AN UNBALANCED ANTI-SADAT RESOLUTION.)

4. ZIONISM/RACISM:

POLLOFF USED FIRST TALKING POINT THIS ISSUE AND THEN CATALOGUED THE DAMAGE UNACCEPTABLE REAFFIRMATION OF RESOLUTION 3379 WOULD HAVE IN WEST AMONG PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD ARABS. NOTED THAT FOR FIRST TIME US AND EUROPEAN PUBLICS COMING TO UNDERSTAND ARAB POSITION, BUT RHETORIC OF ZIONISM/RACISM RESOLUTION COULD DISGUST WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION TO DISADVANTAGE OF ALL ARABS INCLUDING SYRIA. POLOFF SAID HIS UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT SARG WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ITS IMAGE IN WEST. JAZZAR GOT THE POINT, BUT SAID SYRIA HAS NOW SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ZIONISM EQUATED WITH RACISM ON THE UN RECORD AND WOULD NOT RETREAT.

5. COMMENT: SYRIANS CONTINUE TO SEE INTERNATIONAL FORA AS LOCUS FOR SHORT TERM PROPAGANDA GAINS AND ARE NOT INCLINED TO SEE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE LONG TERM IMPACT OF THEIR POSITIONS. IN SPITE OF PREDICTABLE REACTION FROM SYRIAN SIDE, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THESE EXCHANGES ARE HELPFUL AND THAT IN LONG RUN WE WILL HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT. OF COURSE, THEIR ATTITUDE

TOWARD THE NAM IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT THAN IT MIGHT BE TO
UNGA. THE NAM IS SEEN AS A VEHICLE FOR GENERATING MORAL
SUPPORT FOR SYRIA'S POSITION IN DOMESTIC AND INTER-ARAB
TERMS. THE NAM DOES NOT HAVE THE WORLD OR WESTERN AUDIENCE
OF THE UN. THUS, WE MAY HAVE MORE IMPACT WHEN WORKING WITH
SYRIANS ON UNGA THAN TALKING ABOUT THE NAM.
PELLETREAU

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